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New York

President:	Mrs. Albert	(Philippines)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Katti
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	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Tarrisse da Fontoura
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	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Spain	Mr. De Palacio España
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Moir
	United States of America	Mr. Olson

Agenda

Role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building

Letter dated 1 June 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2004/442)

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04-39905 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 3.25 p.m.

Expression of condolence

The President: Before I return to the speakers' list, may I read to you a statement.

I have just learned the sad news that a citizen of the Republic of Korea, Kim Sun-il, held hostage by a terrorist organization in Iraq, was beheaded earlier today. On behalf of the members of the Security Council, I wish to condemn in the strongest terms this abominable act of terrorism against an innocent civilian. I also express my deep condolences to the bereaved family of the victim, as well as to the Government and people of the Republic of Korea. In the face of such evil, the world must stand united against the scourge of international terrorism that continues to plague our global community.

Role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building

The President: I will not individually invite speakers to take seats at the Council table and invite them to resume their seats on the side of the Council Chamber. When a speaker is taking the floor, the conference officer will seat the next speaker on the list at the table. I thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Madam President, may I join you in extending to the people and the Government of the Republic of Korea our deepest condolences on the violent death of a Korean citizen, Mr. Kim Sun-il.

Madam President, the European Union is honoured by your presence in presiding over the Council's deliberations today. We also welcome the participation of the Secretary-General, the President of the Economic and Social Council and representatives from CARE International and the International Centre for Transitional Justice in this open debate.

The EU is grateful for the opportunity to debate this important topic today. The role of civil society in conflict prevention was discussed at an open meeting of the General Assembly last September. I am confident that our debate today will complement those fruitful discussions.

The EU firmly believes that strategic partnerships forged between government and civil society are essential to successful post-conflict reconstruction. While Governments may have a comparative advantage over civil society organizations in certain areas, those organizations can play a pivotal role, in particular where functioning governmental institutions are ineffective or absent. Respective areas of expertise should be mapped out, and mutual responsibilities and accountabilities should be more clearly understood by the two actors.

Post-conflict societies are often polarized societies. It is crucial that bridges of communication are rebuilt between social groups. Post-conflict peace-building must seek to foster the re-emergence of civil society. The process of post-conflict peace-building requires both knowledge and information. Local and national civil society organizations are often invaluable sources in that regard. Even if it is government that must necessarily take the lead, a policy of inclusion and partnership is a sine qua non in effective post-conflict peace-building. Because it is ordinary citizens themselves who are the main targets of peace-building activities, input provided on their behalf by civil society actors is key to the success of that peace-building. Having said that, we also stress the importance of having a good knowledge of one's collaborating partners. In some instances, civil society actors may be part of the same polarization equation that peace-building efforts are trying to break down.

Civil society organizations are often uniquely well-placed to furnish vital grass-roots early-warning facilities such as where a particular peace-building measure being pursued may inadvertently cause a disturbance or impact in some other unintended, negative way. The capacity of civil society organizations as funding sources in peace-building initiatives must also be highlighted in the context of the Council's discussions today.

The European Union has consistently recognized the vital role played by civil society in post-conflict peace-building operations. The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights has funded civil society initiatives that contribute to preventing the outbreak or continuation of conflict. I will mention a few examples.

In Angola, the European Centre for Common Ground has helped to promote the liberalization of the media, over a period of 12 months, through the training of journalists in the principles of human rights and common-ground reporting and programming, the creation of appropriate radio and television programmes and by engaging civil society actors in radio discussion sessions.

In Mozambique, we have a project which intends to strengthen the capacity of grass-roots civil society in the fields of human rights and democratic action in Zambesia Province, supporting the forum of the Zambesian non-governmental organizations through specific capacity-building activities, the reinforcement of information collection skills and the training of civic educators.

One project in Sierra Leone takes a broad approach to the subject of capacity-building for civil society organizations. The focus is to put non-governmental organizations on a new footing with government so as to help promote and protect human rights in a post-conflict environment. A special focus is given to women and children. The project has three objectives: first, to improve the professionalism of human rights non-governmental organizations; secondly, to enhance their watchdog role by developing their knowledge base; and thirdly, to strengthen their advocacy capacity in order to improve inputs into national human rights policies.

In Georgia, the European Union has a confidence-building project in place to promote an environment conducive to a political resolution of the conflict there. The purpose of the project is to contribute to ongoing capacity-building among both wider and more focused networks of committed peace-building non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations and structures. Target groups include young and potential leaders from across Georgia and the Caucasus region, women in positions of leadership, ex-combatants and Georgian regional civil society organizations.

I cannot speak of engagement with civil society in post-conflict peace-building without making specific reference to the extensive cooperation between the European Union and certain non-governmental organizations in promoting fuller participation in, and the effective functioning of, the International Criminal Court (ICC). Impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes poses a serious obstacle in the way of the lasting restoration of peace. In tackling impunity for crimes of this nature, where Governments are unwilling or unable to do so, the ICC can play a key supportive and supplementary role in future peace-building operations.

The European Union also attaches considerable importance to the full and equal participation of women in post-conflict peace-building operations and, in that regard, wishes to recall the Agreed Conclusions adopted during the session of the Commission on the Status of Women held earlier this year. As the Secretary-General recently remarked,

> "... women, who know the price of conflict so well, are also often better equipped than men to prevent or resolve it. For generations, women have served as peace educators, both in their families and in their societies. They have proved instrumental in building bridges rather than walls." (*S/PV.4208, p. 3*)

In recent years, Governments have discovered the real benefits that accrue from cooperating with civil society actors in post-conflict societies. The Security Council is also aware of the important role that non-State actors can play in the process. The European Union encourages the Security Council to reflect further on how it can encourage greater interaction and synergies between these important actors. Future resolutions, for example, might more specifically urge, call upon or encourage newly emerging Governments to cooperate closely with civil society organizations. The European Union also encourages civil society to continue to provide Security Council members with prompt relevant information and to seek to identify innovative ways in which the Council could develop or encourage closer cooperation between government and civil society.

Suspicions of old between Governments and civil society organizations have, in very large measure, receded in many parts of the world, giving way to genuine and meaningful interaction. The European

Union believes that the Security Council is in a strong position to adopt resolutions which preserve and indeed enhance this improved climate. Our debate today should help to crystallise new ideas on how the Council can act as a catalyst in securing even greater integration between these two constituencies.

The President: I cannot but note the reference by the representative of Ireland to the Agreed Conclusions adopted during the session of the Commission on the Status of Women held this year.

I now call on the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The role of civil society is clearly gaining importance for United Nations peace-building and peacekeeping, and there is greater awareness of the needs of peace-building and peacekeeping. In that connection, we cannot fail to recognize the important role played by civil society organizations in the economic, social and humanitarian fields as a channel of communication and daily interaction between Governments, the international community and the people, particularly in post-conflict situations.

We believe that, when considering the role of civil society organizations in peace-building, we must take into account several important elements relative to their broad participation in responses to conflict and post-conflict situations.

In the United Nations system, particularly in the Security Council, we can observe a significant trend of relying on civil society organizations as a ground-level source of information in the economic, political, security and humanitarian fields. That places a moral and a legal responsibility on those organizations to be fully objective and impartial. It is our view that civil society organizations face a real test of credibility and objectivity if they are to be considered full and active partners in the efforts of the United Nations and the international community to help people overcome the negative impact of conflict.

Secondly, the capacity of civil society organizations effectively to help alleviate the suffering of vulnerable or affected groups in a conflict situation is linked to their ability to gain access to those groups to provide humanitarian assistance or other social services. Their commitment to cooperate and work in coordination with the local authorities or the traditional leaders of such societies is important in order for them to enjoy the necessary legitimacy to achieve their goals. Such coordination and cooperation enhances the ability of international civil society organizations to absorb the relevant cultural values of the societies in which they are working, which makes it easier for their efforts to be accepted in the settlement of such disputes.

Thirdly, it is imperative, given the need for cooperation and coordination with local governments, to help to address the root causes of conflicts, to spread a culture of tolerance and to help implement national policies for national reconciliation and the reintegration and rehabilitation of refugees and displaced persons, so that the efforts of such organizations can complement and support national and international peace-building efforts. From that perspective, multilateral relations between the United Nations, national Governments, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions and civil society organizations become increasingly important in order to achieve the synergy necessary to enhance peace-building, peacekeeping, reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.

Fourthly, we should, in that context, reiterate the fact that the achievement of a durable peace requires a comprehensive strategy that takes account of the political, security, economic, social and human dimensions in dealing with post-conflict situations. I am therefore convinced of the importance of the role of civil society in peace-building efforts. It might be appropriate to determine the nature and the limits of such a role in the framework of a comprehensive strategy at the start of efforts to deal with a conflict on the part of the United Nations, the international financial institutions and regional and subregional organizations, in order to achieve clarity of purpose on all sides and realize the necessary synergies.

In that context, we propose that meetings be held between the Security Council and the principal United Nations bodies, including under the Security Council's Arria formula, so that such bodies could become familiar with the priorities and prerequisites of the peace process and the coordination mechanisms in the field, be they peacekeeping missions or the United Nations Resident Coordinators in the States concerned.

It would also be appropriate for civil society organizations active in the field to participate in discussions held by any committees, monitoring

mechanisms or working groups set up by the parties to the conflict, or those related to coordination at the field level.

We have carefully studied the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons, headed by former President Cardoso. We will give it due consideration and study it with a view to helping to strengthen relations between civil society and the United Nations. In that respect, what is required in future is to arrive at agreed norms, rules and mechanisms that would set limits and determine the responsibilities of all partners, in a manner that is commensurate with their means and capabilities, which would rationalize the utilization of the financial, human and material resources available to the international community in the process of facing the challenges inherent in working to achieve a durable international peace.

In conclusion, I should like to express our deep gratitude to you, Madam President, for your successful conduct of this debate. We wish also to thank the delegation of the Philippines for its successful presidency of the Council during the current month.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for the kind words he addressed to me.

I give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Pemagbi (Sierra Leone): My delegation would like to join others in congratulating you, Madam, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of June.

Our participation in this open debate should be seen from the perspective of a country that has experienced a prolonged armed conflict and is in the process of building and consolidating peace. We in Sierra Leone have learned that the search for peace is not, and should never be, the exclusive prerogative of Governments. Civil society and other non-governmental organizations should be fully involved in peacemaking efforts.

Who could forget the role that the civil society movement — comprising, among others, trade unions, women's movements and the Inter-Religious Council — played in facilitating informal but crucial contacts between the parties to the conflict in Sierra Leone? While the Government had always maintained an open-door policy as far as dialogue with the rebels was concerned, those organizations were helpful in the implementation of that policy.

The consequences of armed conflict do not discriminate between Governments and civil society. That is one reason why we share the view that representatives of civil society should be given an opportunity to participate, as observers, in peace talks. We in Sierra Leone went beyond that. We made a provision in the 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement with the rebels for the establishment of a Commission for the Consolidation of Peace in which 40 per cent of the seats were assigned to members of civil society. Three representatives from civil society were also represented in the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources to promote national reconstruction and development.

The act of signing a peace agreement is not enough. Disputes and conflicting views over the interpretation and implementation of the provisions of such an agreement could create obstacles in the process of consolidating peace. It may be necessary, therefore, as we found out in Sierra Leone, to create appropriate non-governmental mechanisms for dealing with such disputes. We made provisions in the Lomé Peace Agreement for a Council of Elders and Religious Leaders to mediate in any conflicting differences of interpretation of any article in the Agreement or its protocols.

The peace-building process is not merely a response and a reaction to the consequences of armed conflict; it is also a proactive contribution to conflict prevention. In building peace, we are also preventing the recurrence of war. That is why the peace-building process should be taken more seriously. It is a process that demands collective effort on the part of the States concerned and the international community as a whole.

As the Council itself has determined, most armed conflicts in the world today — including those described as internal conflicts or civil wars — have repercussions on the maintenance of international peace and security. It is therefore imperative that we mobilize all resources and institutions, including those of civil society, within and across States in the concurrent processes of building peace and preventing further conflict.

The role of civil society in the reintegration of ex-combatants cannot be overemphasized, because their reintegration involves, first and foremost, their

acceptance by members of their respective communities. Sierra Leone is aware of the fact that, as in other post-conflict situations, completing the disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants is a prerequisite for peace-building. We are also aware of the need to get rid of weapons that may have slipped through the formal process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) — weapons that could be used either to rekindle armed conflict or as instruments of banditry or of some other social menace. That is where community arms collection programmes come in. The success of such activities at the community level depends on the active participation of civil society. The Sierra Leone police, in collaboration with civil society, has successfully conducted a community arms collection campaign outside the official DDR programme.

It may be unnecessary to emphasize that civil society is absolutely indispensable in the process of creating a human rights-sensitive culture, especially after a conflict characterized by human rights violations. Citizen education is equally essential in transforming a post-conflict society into a peaceful and stable democracy where all citizens are aware of their rights and responsibilities and where they stand up for those rights.

While recognizing the role that civil society has played and continues to play in building peace in countries emerging from conflict, we must also emphasize the need to ensure that civil society is equipped to meet the challenges of peace-building. The proliferation of armed conflicts, especially in Africa, and the complexity of the problems created by those conflicts — particularly in Africa's least developed countries, such as Sierra Leone — require new strategies for meeting those challenges. Among other things, we need to strengthen or, where they do not exist, create networks of civil society groups at the national, regional and international levels. As The Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the Twenty-first Century pointed out, the effectiveness of civil society is often hampered by a lack of coordination between groups operating in similar fields.

My delegation believes that The Hague Appeal for Peace, as it relates to the role of civil society in peace-building, is still relevant. We would like to take this opportunity to recall that Appeal: in order to increase its effectiveness in this area, civil society should create networks that promote the building of coalitions and constituencies between civil society organizations.

We believe that the Security Council, as part of its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, should reaffirm the need to create and strengthen civil society networks. The Council should promote and support initiatives already in place, such as the Mano River Union Women's Peace Network, organized by women's organizations in the volatile region of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

This meeting of the Council nearly coincided with the launching of the report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations. The Council may wish to take note of relevant recommendations of the Panel. We are referring to those recommendations that could be applied to the Council's relations with civil society — relations that could enhance the work of the Council in the area of post-conflict peace-building.

The President: I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for his constructive and specific contributions to this debate.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you, Madam, on your presidency of the Security Council and on your delegation's initiative of considering the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building.

The nature of conflicts has changed significantly in the past decade. They are no longer conflicts between nation-States, but rather armed conflicts within States. These conflicts are true struggles of national self-depredation in which there is often no difference between civil war and crime. Since the Berlin Wall fell, more than 33 civil conflicts have broken out or resumed, leaving behind nearly 5 million deaths and 17 million refugees. Today, those domestic armed conflicts form a large part of the Council's agenda and result in the deployment of complex peacekeeping operations.

For Peru, the role of civil society — organized non-governmental social actors, such as non-governmental organizations, labour unions, business associations and academic, student and religious groups — is essential to prevent armed domestic conflicts and to contribute to peacemaking and national reconstruction.

As we are considering only post-conflict situations at this meeting, I wish to refer to two central aspects in which civil society contributes to peace-building. First, I shall discuss its contribution to the reconciliation process; secondly, I shall mention its contribution to the nation-building process.

National reconciliation in post-conflict situations is a very complex national process that depends on the social and political conditions in each nation and on the conflict's nature and intensity. However, three essential prerequisites have been identified for national reconciliation: truth, reparation and justice.

In the search for truth and reparation in particular, civil society has an important role. Owing to the need for truth as an element of reconciliation, so-called truth commissions have been established in many post-conflict situations. The merit of such commissions is, or should be, to bring to light what has been hidden during a period of violence and what has not been widely perceived or acknowledged in a nation's daily political discourse following a conflict. That clarification is indispensable to provide collective moral support to the national social reconstruction process. A second precondition for the reconciliation process to be consistent is the compensation of innocent victims and the rehabilitation of areas affected by conflict. Included in that also are former combatants, who should benefit from programmes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration into policy and society. Experience until now has indicated that compensation, which is one of the most important points, is an area where resources are most needed, but for which they are the scarcest. There is a scarcity of resources at the national level as well as at the international level.

Local and global non-governmental organizations have an active role to play in assisting the mobilization of these resources, to use them for victims' compensation, the reconstruction of affected areas and the reintegration of former combatants, thereby transcending the important efforts of humanitarian assistance alone that characterize their action during conflict. Non-governmental organizations and civil society can help direct the best use of international assistance and resources of the United Nations Development Programme, as they are part of the national society. They can also advocate for flexibility in the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, particularly where highly indebted poor countries are concerned.

With regard to justice, the third precondition for reconciliation, it is not necessary to recall the importance for civil society particularly not to leave unpunished violations of human rights, ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Civil society is also a factor in building a bridge between the reconciliation process, to which I referred earlier, and the future reconstruction of a collapsed State, which has been referred to as nation-building activity. In other words, civil society is relevant to creating conditions of governance and the building of democracy, achieving situations that promote dialogue and consensus in these post-violent societies. As a whole, national non-governmental organizations, by virtue of being part of the same society that has been traumatized by violence, are the most appropriate ones to cooperate with complex United Nations peacekeeping operations in restoring the social and political fabric of a collapsed State.

National reconstruction and post-conflict peace-building is therefore a concerted and complex effort that requires the efforts of the United Nations, the Security Council, regional organizations and the flexibility of international financial institutions, but, above all, the commitment of civil society and local non-governmental organizations. We believe efforts must be made to ensure that the Security Council is not only familiar with peacekeeping operations through reports made by United Nations officials themselves or by Member States, but also with how civil society and national non-governmental organizations think and respond to the tasks of complex peacekeeping operations being carried out by the United Nations in their countries.

The Security Council cannot assume its peacekeeping responsibility of ending conflict and establishing the foundation for national reconstruction of collapsed States without having contacts with civil society. Those contacts should be with prestigious, global non-governmental organizations such as Doctors Without Borders, CARE International, Amnesty International or the International Centre for Transitional Justice. However, above all, contacts must be established with national civil society, with the non-governmental organizations that are part of the society that have experienced conflict. To that end, the

respective special representatives of the Secretary-General or the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme could be made responsible for systematically reporting and communicating the opinion of local civil society, of local non-governmental organizations, on peace processes under way. For example, in the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where important members of Congolese civil society appear not to have a favourable opinion of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it would be interesting to know the opinion of those elements of Congolese society.

The relationship between the Council and civil society should be basically practical, in keeping with the Arria formula. To that end, extending that practice to include civil society and local non-governmental organizations of societies in conflict should serve to bring the actions of peacekeeping missions more in line with national realities. We therefore welcome the current visit by a Security Council delegation to West Africa, where members of the delegation will certainly have the opportunity to meet with the local civil society of the countries they are visiting.

In conclusion, allow me to recommend that the Security Council be aware, through reports of special representatives of the Secretary-General or in the manner the Council considers most appropriate, of the viewpoint regarding and the reaction of local civil society to current peacekeeping operations, and particularly that such a practice be made systematic in order to assess the renewal of peacekeeping operation missions, particularly complex ones. Without knowing what civil society thinks, we cannot be realistic about the mandates of such missions and, lacking this knowledge, we cannot carry out national reconstruction and consolidate peace.

The President: I thank the representative of Peru for his kind acknowledgement of our initiative to discuss the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building during our presidency of the Council.

I now call on the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim Sam-hoon (Republic of Korea): Before beginning my statement on the topic at hand, I am extremely grateful to you, Madam President, for your very thoughtful statement on behalf of the members of the Security Council on the sad news of the execution of a Korean citizen by a terrorist organization earlier today in Iraq.

I also cannot but express the deepest sorrow and outrage of my people and my Government upon the killing of an innocent civilian, Mr. Kim Sun-il. The Government of the Republic of Korea condemns the perpetrators of that act and all heinous acts of terrorism, and expresses its strong hope that the international community will work together to find and bring these criminals to justice. The international community must not remain silent about atrocities being committed by terrorist criminals on a nearly daily basis. All Member States must redouble their efforts to demonstrate unmistakably that acts of terrorism will not be tolerated, in order to ensure the safety and the security of innocent civilians from the scourge of terrorism around the world. For its part, the Republic of Korea believes strongly in the efforts of the international community to rebuild a free and democratic Iraq and remains committed to that noble goal.

Turning to today's topic, I wish to extend my appreciation to you, Madam, for convening this open debate on the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building. To my knowledge, this is the first opportunity the Council has had to formally reflect on the key role that civil society plays in the transformation from war to lasting peace. We hope that today will be the beginning of an ongoing fruitful discussion.

As noted in the annex to your letter to the Secretary-General, in the 1990s non-governmental organizations (NGOs) began playing a key role in peace-building efforts in post-conflict countries. At the same time, these crises saw the traditional mandate of NGOs expand significantly beyond humanitarian relief and the protection of vulnerable populations to resource mobilization and the delivery of assistance for post-conflict reconstruction. In many cases, their forward-looking advocacy and tireless efforts have led to momentous policy changes at both the governmental and the intergovernmental levels. Through this enhanced role, NGOs have been transformed and empowered from important but secondary actors to key partners in the process of post-conflict reconstruction. This is a transformation that my delegation fully supports.

Just in time for our debate today, the Secretary-General's Panel Of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations issued its report yesterday. We have yet to fully digest the extensive content of the report, but, on the matter of Security Council interaction with civil society, we endorse the report's recommendation that Council members further strengthen their dialogue with civil society through various measures.

As the Panel's report notes, today's conflicts are complex situations requiring on-the-ground knowledge, new tools and skills in cultural analysis, and the active involvement of communities and their leaders. Civil society organizations are often uniquely positioned to fill these roles, and we are convinced that a deepening of the Council's engagement with civil society in peace-building situations will benefit all actors and the peace process itself.

Some of the measures proposed to achieve this outcome include increased meetings between Security Council field missions and local NGOs; convening independent commissions of inquiry, with civil society participation, after Council-mandated operations; and holding an experimental series of Security Council seminars attended by civil society. We believe that these are all worthy proposals and we look forward to seeing their implementation.

My delegation would just like to add that gender perspectives must be incorporated into all of these efforts. The Republic of Korea is a strong supporter of Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, and expects the spirit of the resolution to extend fully into the Council's expanded interaction with civil society. Indeed, we believe that women's full and equal participation and the integration of gender perspectives should be incorporated at governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental levels to ensure the success of efforts in conflict prevention and resolution, peace processes and post-conflict peace-building.

Peace-building today is a complex process that involves multiple actors and diverse interests, and constructive coordination among all actors is essential to any successful peace-building effort. The first steps often begin with humanitarian confidence-building measures, such as prisoner exchanges, free passage and resettlement for refugees, or the vaccination of children. In all of these tasks, the active participation of civil society organizations is essential, as they are often already established in crisis areas and possess the kind of local knowledge that can be gained only by residents of the affected areas themselves.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea believes that if post-conflict peace-building is to be successful, the vigorous participation of civil society in all aspects of the process is fundamental. We hope that the Council will remain strongly committed to strengthening the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building and we pledge our firm support towards that end.

The President: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for highlighting the important role of women in peace processes and post-conflict peace-building.

I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): Before I speak on today's debate, I wish to express our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, as well as to the Government and people of the Republic of Korea, for the brutal execution of their fellow countryman. The news was so sad and shocking. We join you, Madam, in condemning this barbaric act of terrorism.

I would like to commend you, Madam, for your leadership in convening this open debate on the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building in the Security Council. It is particularly timely in the light of the fact that the report of the Secretary-General's Panel Of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations was just released yesterday.

The report States that Governments alone cannot resolve today's global challenges. This is also true with regard to post-conflict peace-building. It is not realistic to expect that Governments and international organizations alone can respond fully and effectively to everything the process of peace-building requires in such broad and varied fields as the repatriation and resettlement of refugees, the restoration of public security based on the rule of law, economic reconstruction, rehabilitation of local communities, national reconciliation and so on. Civil society organizations which have been engaging for a long time and with strong commitments in those fields of activities have an important role to play in the peace-building process. Not only are they precious additional

assistance forces, but they oftentimes have intimate knowledge and valuable experience that can be useful for effectively carrying out aid activity. I believe that cooperative interaction between those civil society organizations and humanitarian and resident coordinators of the United Nations agencies makes it easier to achieve our common objective: to create an environment in which the people of a post-conflict country can have the hope that they will be able to enjoy better lives tomorrow.

As we speak of the role of civil society organizations in the post-conflict peace-building process, I wish to emphasize two additional points which I consider important. The first point is that civil society organizations can serve as educational forums for the members to deepen understanding of their relations to the international community. Through participation in the activities of such civil society organizations, ordinary people come to realize how deeply they are connected to the international community and develop stronger commitment to international cooperation. Thus, civil society organizations can be reliable supporters and valuable partners of the Governments which are promoting peace-building in a post-conflict society. Where there is not much history of civil society organizations, therefore, it is sometimes appropriate to nurture and strengthen their local civil society organizations, while respecting their status as non-governmental organizations.

As an example, I would like to mention our experience with the Japan Platform, a system to provide more efficient and quick emergency relief, in which non-governmental organizations (NGOs), business, and the Government participate in an equal partnership.

In 1999, some Japanese NGOs began considering assistance to Kosovo refugees. However, they soon realized that they lacked sufficient financial resources and personnel with experience on the ground. Therefore, four NGOs planned a joint project to construct refugee camps, searching for ways to overcome their weak points through cooperation with the Japanese Government. In the process, it became widely recognized that it is better to broaden cooperation not only between NGOs and government but also with other actors such as business, media and academia.

This recognition led to the creation of the Japan Platform, through which the parties concerned coordinate and cooperate for quick and effective implementation of emergency relief, making full use in an equal partnership of the strengths and resources of each party. In this new system, the Government makes financial contributions, business and individuals make donations, the business circle provides technology, equipment, personnel and information, and relevant actors in the media, private foundations and academia participate and cooperate in order to enhance accountability. The NGOs participating in the Japan Platform are vigorously engaging in humanitarian assistance activities aimed at post-conflict peace-building in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Liberia and other countries.

The second point I wish to mention is the unique and important role that local civil society organizations can play. Peace-building cannot succeed without the ownership by the people of a post-conflict country. The activities of the civil society organizations of that country are nothing but an eloquent expression of such ownership, in our view. They are often very effective in the peace-building process as well, since they know their local situation best. For example, a group of traditionally respected figures in a society may be able to persuade perpetrators of human right abuses to admit their guilt and to apologize publicly to the victims for their past wrongdoings. This can be a direct contribution to national reconciliation. I understand that the Bashingantahe of Burundi used to effectively play such a role. Another example is a case in which child soldiers gradually accepted disarmament in response to repeated appeals from a women's association in the community.

The promotion of local civil society organizations also enhances the sense of ownership of the people in a country by providing them with the means to rebuild their society by themselves. Fostering a sense of ownership is also essential for the empowerment of individuals and local communities, and, as a consequence, for the promotion of human security. It is thus important that local civil society organizations develop their activities in post-conflict countries. I believe that the United Nations and the international community should provide assistance to that end. For its part, Japan intends to work together with local civil society organizations in the implementation of projects through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human

Security, as well as Japan's grass-roots human security grant aid.

In establishing the panel on United Nations relations with civil society organizations, the Secretary-General pointed out that there was less participation in United Nations affairs by NGOs from developing countries than from those from the North. The difference in participation may be a reflection of countries' differing appreciation of the role of civil society organizations. I do hope, however, that today's open debate will contribute to the creation of a common recognition of the important role that civil society organizations can play in the post-conflict peace-building process.

The President: I thank the representative of Japan for his kind words in commending my delegation for convening this important open debate on the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building, here in the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Bangladesh compliments the Philippines for a most skilful leadership of the Council during the current month and for the apt choice of the topic for today's deliberations. In our view, your presence, Madam President, has lent a special significance to our current debate. We recall most warmly your recent successful visit to my country. We congratulate you on a good start to your tenure as Foreign Minister. My delegation also welcomes the participation in today's discussions of the representative of CARE International and the International Centre for Transitional Justice.

As a nation of 135 million, which values pluralism so greatly, Bangladesh is one of the largest democracies in the world. We take pride in the fact that our country hosts and promotes a vibrant and globally proactive group of civil society organizations, all of which are homegrown and products of our indigenous ethos. Support to civil society organizations and forging partnerships with them in pursuit of common goals is at the heart of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's Government's policies.

Numbering over 20,000, some of the Bangladeshi non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are the largest in the world and have had the greatest global impact. Grameen and BRAC are household words in most parts of the world. Even as I speak, a network of these civil society organizations are providing primary education to one more girl child, giving microcredit to one more woman in a post-conflict society and making available to another poor woman the wherewithal of empowerment. They are immunizing or rehydrating one more child born in conflict, ameliorating the sufferings of one more sick person by extending her basic medical care and generating employment for one more ex-combatant, helping his social rehabilitation. These activities bring solace and succor to millions around the world and replace their sense of despair with the promise of hope.

In this positive spirit, let me reflect with you on how we could facilitate the role of civil society through collective efforts in assisting and buttressing post-conflict peace-building.

There exists a wide recognition that NGOs and civil society organizations can and do play a significant advocacy and operational role in multilateral efforts to assist post-conflict societies in achieving sustainable peace and stability. They have a well-recorded potential to connect grassroots to global governance, mobilize public opinion and add a fresh voice to global decision-making. They have acted collectively in global campaigns, influenced the outcomes of global conferences, reacted promptly to grave humanitarian crises and fought for justice and reconciliation. The United Nations Charter has envisaged their role in the Organization's work; yet little progress has been achieved in creating institutional mechanisms for making their voices heard in the United Nations and its principal bodies. We must therefore translate the rhetoric into concrete action and develop permanent mechanisms for fostering a United Nations-civil society organizations partnership. This is my first thought.

Secondly, the Economic and Social Council, as the principal intergovernmental body mandated to promote policy processes in addressing deep-rooted socio-economic, cultural, environmental or structural causes of conflict, should be the lead institution in involving civil society organizations in post-conflict peace-building policy recommendations. It should engage NGOs effectively through its consultative mechanisms, its subsidiary commissions and its ad hoc advisory groups on post-conflict countries. It must act as a United Nations system-wide conduit for the transmittal of early warnings and best practices to the

Security Council and to the General Assembly. Now is the time for greater involvement of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in conflict prevention and in peace-building, with a system-wide coordination involving the United Nations agencies, the Bretton Woods Institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations. As a member of the Economic and Social Council, Bangladesh will leave no effort unexplored to achieve this goal.

Thirdly, the field experience of NGOs involved in the operational delivery of rule of law, human rights, justice and humanitarian services, as well as social rehabilitation of ex-combatants and child soldiers, must be incorporated, where appropriate, in the integrated planning process for new peacekeeping missions. Also, NGOs with well-known credentials for women's empowerment and gender justice must be involved in post-conflict peace-building policy development, as empowering women economically and politically helps marginalize extremist thought and action. Bangladesh also advocates that for peacekeeping to lay a strong foundation for long-term peace-building, the two processes must evolve in tandem in a coherent and comprehensive manner involving all partners, including the United Nations, the intergovernmental bodies, the private sector and the civil society organizations.

Fourthly, it is essential to develop a bond of mutual trust and confidence among the NGOs, civil society organizations, the United Nations system and intergovernmental and governmental processes in order to have an effective collective partnership and to achieve a consensual approach to peace-building. We encourage the NGO community to explore their potentials and to ensure that their own mandates focus on prevention of conflicts and post-conflict rebuilding. Also, the debate over the NGOs lacking the legitimacy and accountability of elected Governments must be tempered by fostering an institutional mechanism for greater NGO accountability, transparency and a code of conduct in their governance.

Finally, the significantly low representation of NGOs and civil society organizations from developing countries enjoying consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or association with the United Nations Department of Public Information must be improved. Bangladesh fully supports global coalition and networks of issue-based civil society organizations for strong global advocacy. We also encourage a regional or a South-South perspective in NGO networking in post-conflict peace-building. After all, social transformations must come from within and cannot be imposed from outside. Cultural sensitivities and local values must be taken into account in peace-building. Examples from comparable societies must be shared.

As a country deeply involved in the shepherding and implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, it is our firm belief, indeed faith, that the civil society is the voice and the ears of the grassroots. It has the capacity to educate the masses about the value and dividends of peace and non-violence. It must be embraced as an equal partner if our common aspiration for peace and prosperity is to translate from hope to fruition. We call upon the Security Council to garner the political will to invest today in the civil society, a tested partner in peace and development, to avoid costly wars tomorrow. That is a categorical imperative that we would ignore with great peril and sad consequences.

The President: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words addressed to me, and for sharing with us concrete and positive contributions to our current debate on the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building.

I now call on the representative of Australia.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Madam President, let me immediately join you and others in both condemning the barbaric terrorism demonstrated in the beheading of a Korean citizen in Iraq today and in extending to our Korean colleague, the victim's family and all Koreans the heartfelt condolences of all Australians. As close friends of Koreans, we will feel this act of barbaric terrorism very keenly.

But let me also thank you very much, Madam President, for convening this meeting and offer you what you will know are my most sincere and personal congratulations. You are a wonderful advertisement for your country, as you have demonstrated over many years in mine.

I wish also to welcome today the participation in this debate of our friends from the International Centre for Transitional Justice and from CARE.

On the basis of our own first-hand and recent experience, Australia very much welcomes the opportunity to address the Council on this important

subject. Through our involvement in peace-building efforts in Timor-Leste, Bougainville and the Solomon Islands, Australia has seen and encouraged the crucial role that civil society plays in post-conflict situations.

An important example is the role civil society has played in post-conflict peace-building in Timor-Leste since the earliest days of the international response to the 1999 humanitarian crisis. Such cooperation was identified as a major objective of the Australian Government's interim country strategy for development cooperation with Timor-Leste. Through its development assistance programme Australia has provided support to local organizations in Timor-Leste to build their capacity to deliver essential services to the people. We have assisted in the development of civil society advocacy and watchdog groups, for example, through the key civil society coordination body established after the crisis, the NGO Forum. That we see as an essential part of building and maintaining stability in the young State. A well-informed and dynamic civil society helps to ensure that societal tensions and conflicts can be resolved in constructive and non-violent ways.

We welcome the fact that strategic dialogue on the role of civil society is a regular feature of the planning and review of implementation of the Timor-Leste Government's core multidonor-funded transitional support programme. A recent World Bank study on governance issues in Timor-Leste reconfirmed the importance of developing the role of Timor-Leste's civil society as a critical element of a system of checks and balances to ensure good governance and prevent public corruption.

Bougainville is a less well-known example. Australia is a strong supporter of both the Bougainville peace process and the role that civil society has played in successful peace-building there. Through our leadership of the four-country regional Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) and, more recently, the small civilian Bougainville Transition Team (BTT), Australia has been closely involved in peace-building efforts, working closely with the United Nations Political Office on Bougainville.

In Bougainville, with the encouragement and support of the PMG and the BTT, representatives of civil society were able to promote peace and reconciliation at the grassroots level. Members of the Bougainville Constitutional Commission — a broad-based body that included representatives of women's groups, churches, traditional leaders and youth — were among those responsible for developing a draft constitution for the autonomous government. The involvement of civil society brought a perceived neutrality, shared experience and local knowledge to peace-building activities such as reconciliation and trauma counselling.

The Solomon Islands is an even less well-known example, but it is every bit as important as Timor-Leste and Bougainville. Australia, through its involvement in the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), has been engaged with civil society there from the outset. There is a broad range of well-organized civil society groups in Solomon Islands comprising all sections of the community, including churches — crucially, women — and youth. Many are well organized in regional areas. RAMSI regularly consults with these groups.

A striking example is RAMSI's relationship with the National Peace Council, an important indigenous organization striving for peace and reconciliation for the benefit of all Solomon Islanders. The National Peace Council has worked tirelessly throughout Solomon Islands with RAMSI. It facilitated the removal of guns from communities across the country, which resulted in the hand-in or confiscation of some 3,700 weapons, which have now been destroyed.

Our experience is, of course, not unique. As we have heard today, the critical contribution of civil society to post-conflict situations is well documented in other examples around the world — indeed, often better documented, frankly, than the three of which I have spoken today. The challenge before the Council is how to apply lessons learned, how to incorporate them into the design of mandates and how best to involve all the United Nations agencies more closely with civil society organizations. Our experience and that of our neighbours provides important textbook material.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia for his kind and warm words addressed to me. I know only too well Australia's significant contributions to developing civil society groups in post-conflict peace-building in our immediate region.

I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): First of all, let me, Madam President, congratulate you on the able manner in which you are chairing this meeting and congratulate the Philippines presidency on organizing this important debate.

Uganda joins you, Madam President, and the members of the Security Council in expressing disgust and shock at the death of the national of the Republic of Korea, and especially at the brutal way he was killed. Terrorism is a menace to the international community, and the international community must join hands in fighting this menace. Whatever political motivation the terrorists have, the end does not justify the means.

In 2001, I was a member of the mediation team in the peace talks between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement and Army. We visited southern Sudan to assess the conflict on the ground. We visited an area called Thiet. The effect of merciless wars was evident. There were no services, schools or health centres to speak of. There was no government. The surviving population was hungry, and children were undernourished and in rags. In that desolate situation there was a ray of hope, and that was the limited service provided by a non-governmental organization, World Vision. They provided water by sinking boreholes and digging dams. They built health centres. In fact, we stayed overnight in their camp. They cooperated with the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, which had an effective presence on the ground. The officials of the organization lived in fear of aerial bombardment, and all around their camps they had dug shelters. Yet, because of their call to serve humanity, they risked their lives to work in southern Sudan. I have given this example to illustrate the important role played by civil society in conflict areas.

The United Nations and, indeed, the Security Council have recognized the important role played by civil society organizations in post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction. Their role in providing humanitarian assistance and relief is well known. They have provided social infrastructure such as schools, dispensaries and sanitation.

However, to be successful in post-conflict situations, civil society organizations must be partners with Governments. Their role should be complementary to that of Governments. They should not engage in activities that would undermine their impartiality and thus be seen in some quarters as spies or as siding with subversive elements.

Civil society organizations should engage in activities that would promote reconciliation, peace and stability. For instance, their role in promoting good governance and the observance of human rights can be crucial, such as their participation in election monitoring, illiteracy campaigns and civic education. More attention should be paid to the role of women in post-conflict peace-building. Civil society organizations can organize women's groups and set up micro-financing institutions to finance women's enterprises in agriculture and industry in the developing countries. They could also organize vocational training.

However, a proliferation of civil society organizations should be avoided. In some cases, post-conflict peace-building has become an industry. All manner of civil society organizations have sprung up, some with dubious credentials. There should be coherence and relevancy. To achieve this, concerned countries should put in place a regulatory framework which would provide harmonization and effectiveness without interfering in the internal structure of such organizations. Non-governmental organizations should not behave as if they were governments unto themselves. They can play a vital role in providing useful information and advice to Governments in fashioning effective post-conflict policies. For that purpose, there should be a forum in which Governments and civil society organizations can exchange ideas. The results of those exchanges could lead to informed decisions, including legislation.

Aside from partnering with Governments, civil society organizations should work closely with United Nations agencies in the field in building post-conflict institutions. It would be useful, for example, to have a dialogue with the relevant civil society organizations before peacekeeping missions are sent into the field, in order to work out effective programmes.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank civil society organizations for their role in providing humanitarian assistance to the people displaced in northern Uganda as a result of the untold atrocities visited on the population by Joseph Kony's murderous rebel group.

Once again, we call on the international community to rein in Mr. Kony and his gang so that their crimes do not go unpunished. The Government of Uganda has provided substantial resources for post-conflict reconstruction in northern Uganda as it closes in on Mr. Kony and his bandits. For instance, all children going to secondary school whose parents are in displaced persons camps are to have free education. Children in primary schools in the area, and indeed throughout the country, are to be provided with a free lunch of porridge and milk. Money has been set aside for renting tractors to engage in agricultural production. The Government invites civil society organizations to take part in those and other reconstruction programmes by providing personnel and funds.

The President: We note the representative of Uganda's words of caution and concern on the proliferation of civil society organizations.

Mr. Rock (Canada): Before anything else, permit me to express on behalf of the Government and the people of Canada our sense of horror and our condemnation of the brutal and barbaric act of terrorism that today has taken the life of the citizen of the Republic of Korea in Iraq. We also express our sincere condolences to the family of the victim and to the people of Korea in this difficult hour.

Madam President, it is a pleasure to see you presiding in this Chamber. I thank you and your Government for the initiative of putting this important subject on today's agenda and for the very helpful paper that you have provided to members.

Madam President, your paper, coupled with the publication yesterday of the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations appointed by the Secretary-General (A/58/817) underlines the importance of our collective and ongoing consideration of the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building.

Canada welcomes the recommendations of the Panel, in particular its recognition of the need for stronger mechanisms to permit interaction between non-governmental organizations and members of the Security Council. We are pleased at the trend towards more frequent resort to the Arria-formula meetings. We welcome the recommendation for Security Council seminars with non-governmental organization (NGO) participation, and we support it. It seems to us that such sessions can enable NGOs to make timely and effective interventions when the Council is dealing with a range of issues and a range of countries. Recent conflicts have demonstrated the importance of civil society organizations having access to the Council to highlight concerns, especially with respect to violations of international law and of human rights.

Access by NGOs to the Security Council is essential not only in the context of active conflicts but also in cases of fragile peace. The involvement of civil society organizations has proven essential in a number of contexts, many of which have been referred to by my colleagues in their presentations this afternoon. The range of areas in which civil society organizations has been helpful is truly impressive. Whether it has been in disarmament, demobilization or reintegration efforts or by actually developing ceasefire or peace agreements, whether it has been in post-conflict confidence-building or peacekeeping, it is clear that they have a unique contribution to make.

In addition to galvanizing global support for causes such as the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines or the creation of the International Criminal Court, civil society organizations have also been instrumental in generating sustained international attention on issues such as the plight of children affected by armed conflict; women, peace and security; and the proliferation and misuse of illicit small arms and light weapons. In each of those areas, civil society organizations have galvanized efforts to take concrete measures at the national and international levels.

While the number of inter-State conflicts has declined in the last 25 years, we have seen a proliferation of civil conflicts within States, and civilians are paying the heaviest price for that change. In that context, peace-building from the top down is a recipe for failure. Stable futures must be built from the level of the community up. Involvement of civil society is therefore a natural and fundamental element if those efforts are to succeed.

In that respect, one area that Canada would draw to the attention of the Council is the vital role of women in conflict prevention, in humanitarian action and in the process of peace-building. Understanding and addressing gender differences and inequalities is fundamental to both building sustainable peace and identifying effective responses. For that reason, Canada's efforts to build sustainable peace place great

emphasis on the inclusion of women as equal partners in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution and in peace-building.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) is, of course, a landmark. We all know about its impact. That resolution not only provides us with a framework for supporting the participation of women, including displaced women and local and international women's groups, but it also obliges us to use that enormous resource. Canada stands firmly behind those commitments, and we will continue to work with our colleagues to consistently make women's equal participation in all post-conflict peace-building efforts a reality.

(*spoke in French*)

Before concluding, I should like to emphasize another important aspect of the peace-building process, one in which civil society plays a pivotal role and in which women's participation is particularly crucial — that is, democratic institution-building.

Democratic governance is key to building a society that can manage conflict without resorting to violence — a society in which opposing points of views can be expressed, debated, and even passionately disputed, without undermining the system as a whole; a society in which differences can be managed peacefully.

In fragile post-conflict situations, institutions and procedures designed to manage differences and potential conflicts in a non-violent manner and in a spirit of compromise are particularly essential.

As is highlighted in the Panel's report, one of the key principles of representative democracy is connecting citizens to the decisions that affect them and ensuring public accountability for those decisions. In post-conflict societies, if citizens are not connected to their Government; to the peace processes that will deeply affect their future; or, no less importantly, to one another, new sources of grievance and conflict will emerge.

(*spoke in English*)

Time and again we see that leadership and advocacy for democracy comes from civil society at the local level. When that is complemented with support from, and dialogue with, the international community, effective and positive energy is demonstrated for post-conflict peace-building.

As the General Assembly has already acknowledged, civil society is a powerful force for peace-building and conflict prevention. Let us together ensure that its full potential is mobilized in the cause of sustainable peace, the search for which unites us all.

The President: I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for highlighting the need to build stronger mechanisms that would link civil society and the United Nations. I welcome his emphasis on the special contribution of women to sustainable peace.

I give the floor to the representative of Senegal.

Mr. Badji (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, before beginning my statement, to express to the delegation of the Republic of Korea the deep empathy of the delegation of Senegal in these difficult circumstances. We vigorously condemn the barbaric act that took the life of an innocent Korean citizen. We extend our most heartfelt condolences and sympathy.

Madam President, after welcoming your presence here among us, I should like warmly to congratulate you and your delegation on the outstanding manner in which you have been presiding over the Security Council this month and also to convey to you the appreciation and gratitude of the delegation of Senegal for your praiseworthy initiative in organizing, within this forum, a public debate on the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building.

Despite the laudable efforts of the international community and the deep involvement of our Organization in conflict resolution and in pacifying hotbeds of tension, the volatile situation in the field in many conflict-affected countries and regions has often promoted a resurgence of such conflicts. That is why, more than ever, there is an imperative and urgent need to harmonize the actions of all of the players in the crucial phase of post-conflict peace-building, in accordance, moreover, with one of the recommendations contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 57/337 of 3 July 2003 on conflict prevention.

Given their presence in the field, their proximity to the players and their familiarity with political, economic and social realities, civil society organizations can, in a symbiotic relationship with

Governments and international organizations, play a decisive role, at least during two stages linked to peace-building: the phase of the creation of objectives and the period of the implementation of such objectives.

My delegation believes that there is a crucial need for the United Nations and in particular the Security Council to invite civil society organizations fully to participate in defining transition mandates even before peacekeeping operations conclude. The idea is to combine the global, regional or subregional vision of any United Nations approach and the local perspective inherent in the activities of civil society organizations. Such an inclusive approach would allow those organizations to provide first-hand information on the milieu in which they are developing and to participate actively in the definition of objectives and peace-building means by spelling out their areas of preference.

Moreover, the contribution of civil society organizations can be even more decisive in the phase of active peace-building, since they seem to respond more swiftly than other actors in carrying out certain tasks, such as assistance for refugees and displaced persons or their reintegration into their lands. However, the assignment of such missions to civil society organizations must be preceded by adequate financing and by a division of tasks to be agreed upon with the official United Nations representative in the country concerned.

With regard to the African continent — battered by so much violence and by so many armed conflicts — the civil society organizations already present on the ground are in a position to better play their role at this sensitive stage of peace-building. That is, they would stand to benefit from the international community's moral, material and financial support, so that many of them would no longer be merely passive and powerless witnesses to unspeakable human tragedies, but actors in the redemption of the communities they wish to serve.

In conclusion, I should like to clarify that at this critical stage of peace-building, active complementarity — I would even say active solidarity and positive cooperation — on the part of all the various players must prevail. In that regard, the Security Council would be well advised to lay the foundation for a normative framework defining the responsibility of all actors — including those of civil society — with a view to promoting a coordinated, consistent and swift response to the imperatives of peace-building.

The President: I thank the representative of Senegal for the kind words he addressed to me and to my delegation regarding our presidency of the Council, as well as for his acknowledgement of our initiative to discuss the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building in the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): Let me begin by congratulating you, Madam, on your delegation's assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and conducting the Council in an outstanding manner. My delegation also appreciates the fact that you have convened this interesting debate and have provided an excellent background paper on the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building.

Post-conflict peace-building helps countries emerging from conflict to get back on their feet and to prevent their relapse into violence. In Nepal's view, peace-building is as much a conflict prevention measure as it is a building block for durable peace, for which overall economic and social development is absolutely critical.

The Security Council, responsible for international peace and security, is right to explore all avenues to fulfil its obligations. My delegation has viewed this debate in that light, not as an endeavour of the Council to expand its role into every nook and cranny just because it could. We trust that this debate will inspire the Council to work coherently with the pertinent organs and agencies of the United Nations — such as the Economic and Social Council — that have mandates and competence in the domain of development, and not to usurp their roles.

For quite some time, civil society organizations — such as non-governmental, religious, private sector and community organizations — have been important partners in efforts to promote peace and development in the world. They have rallied against wars and weapons; they have provided early warnings of gathering storms by exposing gross human rights violations and injustices; and they have helped us to understand conflict situations from their perspective.

Many times, those organizations have been able to coax the conflicting parties to the negotiating table, have worked as objective arbiters and have actively delivered humanitarian assistance to the victims of war.

Civil society actors clearly stand out in their contributions to post-conflict peace-building. They reach out to the most difficult areas and to the most deprived people, and they make a palpable impact with limited resources through social mobilization. These outfits encourage the process of healing and foster social harmony. They help build capacity and empower people by helping them to rebuild their shattered lives and to strengthen their institutions. Civil society does its job with the utmost efficiency, agility and effectiveness.

Undoubtedly, the United Nations must tap into these positive potentials of civil society with respect to consolidating peace. It could involve civil society more effectively in planning, implementing and monitoring peace-building activities in war-ravaged societies. Civil society organizations could be asked to monitor the implementation of peace agreements in order to build confidence and promote reconciliation between the conflicting parties and to make them accountable for their actions. That could be part of an exit strategy for the United Nations.

That said, the role that civil society can play in peace-building should be understood in its context. Civil society has been very powerful in advocacy, and its role in reconstruction efforts has been remarkable but limited. The limited role of civil society in peace-building is understandable. Unfortunately, not all post-conflict situations are accorded the significance they deserve by the world community. More often than not, when peace is restored in a war-torn country, the international community moves on to the next trouble spot. As a result resources for peace-building dry up, leaving both civil society and the country in question high and dry. Civil society is forced to follow the tide and to go where it finds a piece of action and the resources to make a difference.

The main point here is this: what can the United Nations do to change this situation, and how can the Security Council help to sustain peace-building efforts? There ought to be a seamless transition from peacekeeping to peace-building to development. The Security Council should ensure that peacekeeping operations are followed by a reduced and reconfigured United Nations presence with adequate resources until the country emerging from conflict is fully able, with the help of development agencies and donors, to absorb all activities undertaken by the closing peacekeeping operation and until that country begins to move forward on the road to reconciliation and economic recovery.

In the peace-building phase, the Council should promote cooperation in a spirit of partnership with the organs and agencies of the United Nations that have competence in the development realm. Working together with civil society and Governments, the various relevant organs of the United Nations will be able to foster synergy and fulfil their respective obligations and mandates. I hope that the Security Council will want to look into that possibility.

Finally, one firefight after another has not brought durable peace so far, and it will not in the future either. Lasting peace requires increased investment in economic and social transformation and the energy and the efforts of all key stakeholders, including civil society, to remove the root causes of conflict such as poverty, hunger, deprivation and, of course, injustice.

The President: I thank the representative of Nepal for his contributions to this debate. I also thank him for his expression of appreciation of the importance and the relevance of this particular open debate on the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building during our presidency of the Security Council.

I shall now give the floor to the Secretary General of CARE International, Mr. Denis Caillaux, to respond to comments and questions raised during the debate.

Mr. Caillaux: I will certainly not try to summarize the very rich discussion we had throughout the day. I will just limit myself to three central points that I have gotten from this discussion.

The first one really is the focus on the local level and the importance of what you yourself, Madam President, have defined as the healing power, the healing potential of civil society. I think this is what it is all about in the peace-building process we have been discussing. You have expressed that very, very well. Certainly for an organization like the one I represent, this is the core of our mandate. Our mandate is

fundamentally to facilitate the process of emergence of this local civil society and then to gently recede into the background and support them in whatever way we can.

That leads me to my second point, which has been raised by some speakers. Indeed, we — civil society organizations — have to work hard at our own accountability, particularly our accountability to our beneficiaries. It is certainly a process that we are getting into with seriousness and dedication, and I am privileged to have initiated, at the beginning of the year with about dozen like-minded organizations, what we call a humanitarian accountability partnership, whereby at our humble level we look seriously and honestly at our own accountability to our beneficiaries. I think it is a very healthy process that is absolutely fundamental if we are to really be genuinely part of the kind of role that has been discussed here today.

But I guess, above all, I will leave this debate reassured that Council members and Member States generally will be firm in setting and enforcing the rule of law, thereby creating a secure environment and ensuring the protection of civilians that is required to enable their own energies and skill to really flourish in the building of peace.

The President: I thank the Secretary General of CARE International for his comments, and we welcome in particular his concerns for accountability.

I shall now give the floor to the Vice President of the International Centre for Transitional Justice, Mr. Ian Martin, to respond to comments and questions that may have been raised during the debate.

Mr. Martin: I think that any representative of a civil society organization who had heard the whole of today's debate would feel, as I do, very gratified by the strength of the consensus that has been expressed around this table regarding the importance of the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building. It is striking to have heard Member States voice support for a very considerable range of initiatives that the Security Council itself could take or encourage others to take, all of which are also in the spirit of the report of the Cardoso Panel, which in such a timely manner has informed the debate. As we have heard, these initiatives have included the enhanced used of the Arria formula, and I think that, particularly because I am from an organization working at the international level, I would stress again the importance of the Arria formula being more open to those from developing countries, from our local partners.

The measures have included the holding of seminars between the Security Council and civil society. As we have, many members have stressed the importance of contacts in the field, which can be more open to local civil society during Security Council missions, engaging civil society in peace settlements, mission planning and needs assessments, the utility of appropriate references in Council resolutions and mandates to engagement with civil society, encouraging special representatives of the Secretary-General to engage in regular consultation with local civil society, the possibility of NGO coordinators in missions, and the communication back to the Council of the point of view of civil society on peacekeeping operations.

I am certain, without purporting to speak for them, that our local partners would warmly welcome moves in all those directions. But most of all I think they would welcome, as I do, simply the spirit of this debate of openness and cooperation between the Council and civil society. I thank you, Madam President, and your Government for providing the opportunity and for setting the tone for that debate.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your positive and constructive contributions to this open debate. We in the presidency of the Council are heartened by the thoughts, comments, suggestions and, most of all, your support in making our theme a truly relevant and meaningful one. We look forward to similar future cooperation.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.